

## English summaries

**Ulf Blossing:** Change agents for school development:  
Roles and process of implementation

This article focuses on the internal change agents' roles and functions in three Swedish municipalities and their seventeen schools. Schools organize the inner work and in particular the leadership differently, which affect the learning of the students. Research shows that effective schools are tightly coupled and show consistency, constancy and cohesion regarding visions, norms and routines. Therefore questions of the inner organization of the local school are of utmost importance for principals. This is especially true for principals in Sweden since they in an international comparison have a considerable local responsibility concerning e.g. the budget, the employing of teachers and setting of wage rates, and most important, to organize a pedagogical leadership. It is in this context it is interesting to study Swedish municipalities' efforts to develop change agents with the aim that they take on a leadership close to the class-room practice and forcefully drive school development.

The lesson from research is that change agent leadership is a multi-functional mission and need extensive support. Research also questions if the expectations on internal change agents are realistic.

In the investigated municipalities these change agents are known as development pedagogues, learning leaders, and process leaders respectively. In this article their functions and roles are understood and examined in terms of the change agent as this role is described in the organisational development literature. The study contributes to the understanding of the implementation of change agent positions and to describe the change agents' roles in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools.

The investigation began in January 2009 as an action research project between a university in Sweden and the Swedish municipalities of Vejde, Skogsnäva and Hägg (names coded). It was initiated by two development leaders in Vejde. They had organised what can be called a development organisation in their municipality, i.e. an organization especially built up in order to improve teaching. Seventeen schools participated with 36 change agents. Data consisted of the change agents' journals and interviews with the school leaders.

The first analysis concerns the change agent's position in the organizational structure and its significance for the school organization. Based on data the structure has been assessed along the dimension clear-unclear, and the communication within the organisation along the dimension strong-weak, for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011. In this way a basis has been obtained for telling the organizational history concerning the change agents' positions and significance. The second analysis concerns the change agents' functions and the formation of roles. Based on the journals from the change agents their functions have been assessed along the dimension micro-macro processes and the organizational position of the function alongside the dimension operative work organization – development organization. In this way a four-squared matrix has been created displaying four ideal typical roles of the change agents: The assistant, the guide, the project leader and the organisation developer. It was fairly easy using data to put the change agents into this matrix.

The results show that a clear organizational structure, as well as a strong communication, promotes the development of the change agents' work. What space among these ideal roles the change agents occupy depends on the degree of strategic planning in the municipality as well as how one understands the aims of the internal agents.

As implied by much literature the change agent definition focuses on innovative work; being the ground-breaking change agent putting new and glimmering learning models into work. But the study shows that the routine work of management is mixed with the development work. Small improvement with a developmental character can often hardly be distinguished from the adjustments of the operative work organization. Change agents run the same risk as the pedagogical leadership role of principals. A lot of work – but adjustments to reality takes over goals of development. A decision to adopt change agents in schools, and action research on their roles, should take this into consideration in order to increase the room for more innovative work by the change agents.

**Karin Rönnerman and Anette Olin:** Quality work in preschool:  
three levels of leading practices

To ensure the quality of pre-schools the Swedish National Agency for Education developed comprehensive guidelines for how quality work in each pre-school should be planned, assessed and developed in relation to the nationally prescribed goals. It is the Director of the pre-school, in collaboration with the preschool teachers, who together have a responsibility to ensure that the national goals, as set out in the Swedish National Education Act, are met.

This paper will discuss how two examples of quality work in the Swedish pre-school is carried out. There are two levels representing the organization, namely the municipality and the pre-school. For this study two municipalities were chosen and their respective directors (so both the municipality and pre-schools have directors, but on different levels). Both directors of the municipalities, as well as the staff in the pre-schools, had the experience of collaborating with the researchers during the time when 'quality-work' was implemented. This work involved taking part in a year-long program in action research. Today pre-school teachers are responsible for facilitating action research to their colleagues to ensure the continuity of quality of work in the pre-schools. Three levels of leading practices were identified: 1) The director from the local municipality, 2), The directors of each pre-school and 3) The pre-school teachers.

The purpose of this article is specifically to using the theoretical framework of practice architecture for analyzing a) how quality-work is organized at three levels in two municipalities, b) what enables and constrains quality work from one level to another and c) how each level is prefigured by cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. Data was collected by interviewing the directors in both the municipalities and in the pre-schools. The open-ended interviews with the pre-school teachers were collated and developed into mind-maps.

The article draws on the theory of practice architectures to examine the social nature of the language, the activities and the relationships of a practice. The practices involve how the quality work is being led on the three different levels. A practice is seen as social and is prefigured by cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. These arrangements enable and constrain particular kinds of language (or *sayings*), activities (or *doings*) and relationships (or *relatings*), which together constitute a practice. We analysed the practices on each level, but also tried to see if and, how the practices had influenced other levels. The data was analyzed in two steps. Firstly, a narrative was constructed out of the interviews from all levels in the two municipalities, here referred to as *North* and *South*. Secondly, each practice was analyzed using the theory of practice architecture with a focus on how the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements enables or constrains the practice of quality work.

In the findings both municipalities used action research as a way to ensure quality work and allowed the pre-school teachers to facilitate peers into the process (cultural-discursive arrangements). Both municipalities' provided resources such as time and space for the pre-school teachers to conduct action research as a way to improve quality in the everyday work as well as time to the two teachers to facilitate their colleagues (material-economic arrangements). When looking further into the two municipalities' participation and dialogue

two concepts were used to show differences in how the practices on each level was dealing with quality work, but also how this was operating between the three practices (socio-political arrangements).

In the *North* municipality a continuous dialogue and participation between all the three practices were noted. The director of the municipality set up a group in which the director for the pre-school and the pre-school teachers were involved. They met regularly and had an open dialogue about what happened in each practice relating to the quality work. Similarly the director for the pre-school developed a group at the preschool involving four pre-school teachers in the planning and later presenting the quality work at the staff meetings which led to whole staff discussion. Time was set aside at the staff meetings especially for sharing experiences about the specific quality work each teacher team were responsible for and to further develop and implement different ideas representing quality work for their specific group of children.

In the *South* municipality the director of the municipality organized a group of directors from three pre-schools, but with no pre-school teacher representatives. Nor were there a group established specifically to have the responsibility of quality work at the actual pre-school. Rather the sharing of experiences was done during staff meetings.

The conclusions from the study suggest that when groups were established both within and outside of pre-schools dialogue and participation became important. All these groups ensured that action research was cemented throughout the organization getting all partners involved in the quality work, as the North example best showed.

**Maria Jarl:** About head teachers pedagogical leadership  
in the light of management reforms in school

In the beginning of the 1990s public education in Sweden went through extensive reforms heavily inspired by the new public management ideology. The structural changes involved i) the introduction of management by objectives and results, ii) decentralization of responsibility for the funding and organization of public education from the state level to the municipalities and iii) the transfer of the responsibility for hiring and paying teachers and principals from the state to the municipalities. Professional school leaders who can take an overall responsibility for the individual schools' performance was seen as crucial. Professional school leaders were even seen as a prerequisite for the reforms to function optimally.

Today, more than two decades later, studies show that Swedish school principals as a collective has developed a professional project. Not only has there been an institutional separation between teachers' and principals' work at the level of the

individual school. Also, the principals have gained an increasing level of support for a distinct professional project centered on the core aspects of leadership. The professionalization of principals as a collective is not, however, the same as saying that individual principals can handle the responsibility for school development as required of them by the Education Act and the curriculum.

The main aim of the article is to discuss whether Swedish school principals act as pedagogical leaders. The concept of pedagogical leadership is commonly used as a generic term to describe the responsibility for school development required of the principals as a consequence of the NPM inspired structural reorganization of Swedish public education. In the article, I discuss a variety of examples of how Swedish school principals conduct their pedagogical leadership. The examples are taken from current research as well as from official statements and reports by state authorities and other organizations in the education field.

Examples of school principals acting as pedagogical leaders are discussed. For instance, principals report having a substantial discretion to make decisions regarding economic and personnel matters of the school. Individual principals also report having strengthened their pedagogical leadership while taking part in different educational programs organized by the state. However, examples of school principals that, for different reasons, face difficulties in their leadership activities seems to dominate the picture. Reports from the Swedish School Inspectorate show for one thing shortcomings regarding principals' systematic quality work. It is also shown that principals do not seem to be able to systematically analyze the results of the school, nor to base their decisions of the future activities of the school on such analyses.

Possible reasons why principals seem to have severe difficulties in acting as pedagogical leaders are discussed. One explanation that has been targeted in the political educational debate during the last years is that principals commonly lack professional support systems regarding finance, personnel and other administrative routines. It is the responsibility of the municipalities to provide such a support.

The article concludes by arguing that efforts to further strengthen and support the principals in their work as pedagogical leaders is probably one of the most important things to focus on in current educational policy in Sweden.

**Rolf Lander:** Novice teachers' professional self-efficacy in working with children – from where does it evolve?

Novice teachers with 3,5 years, or less, of teaching experience were asked to participate in a questionnaire study about their self-efficacy in professional work. They were educated as teachers at the University of Gothenburg during the first

years of a new teacher education reform launched in 2001. At the very end of their education they answered a questionnaire about their present professional self-efficacy, how eagerly they wanted to be a teacher, and how they valued their education, including among other things what they had learned about special education, pupil care and school leadership. The second questionnaire was mailed to them during autumn 2008. Those who had left the profession was not taken into this study. 806 teachers thus supplied responses to both questionnaires. The response rate is 26 per cent counting on all those who at some time had been registered at this teacher education between 2001 and 2004, and 65 per cent of those who, by stating their names in the first questionnaire, agreed to being mailed a second questionnaire.

70 per cent of participating teachers had a teacher education for class teachers, pre-school teachers or leisure staff. 30 per cent were subject teachers trained for the upper grades of the comprehensive school or the upper secondary school. This difference, however, played a minor role for the results of the study. Working at a municipal school or a private school also had a minor role.

Data was put into a quasi-experimental design, where the self-efficacy in questionnaire 1 was made to control for the self-efficacy in questionnaire 2. Other controls were about time working as a teacher before teacher education, and marks at upper secondary schools. Parents' social class was registered. Neither of these variables, besides questionnaire 1 efficacy, had any impact on teachers' later self-efficacy, or their experience at working as a teacher after the education.

In constructing questionnaire 2 a special interest was devoted to measures of head-teachers pedagogical leadership, in-service training, and common norms among teachers about how to handle pupils and parents, and critical cooperation among teacher colleagues. Critical here means intimate cooperation which includes giving and taking direct advice, helping each other's in giving feedback to pupils etc. Again questions were asked about special education, pupil care and school leadership, and how well the roles executed in this were understood by the respondent. Also questions about the freedom in decision-making in classroom work were put to the respondent.

Among factors affecting later professional self-efficacy the most important was the efficacy measured in questionnaire 1 at the end of the teacher education, with a total effect of 0,39 as measured by regression coefficients in structural equations modeling. Not far behind came understanding the roles of special education teachers, pupil care staff, and head teachers (0,34), and the impact of the earlier teacher education (0,31). Also important was critical cooperation with colleagues (0,25), and the feeling of being autonomous in classroom work (0,19). Contrary to expectations common norms did not affect professional self-efficacy. Also contrary to expectations in-service training had almost no relation to self-efficacy. It had, however, a relation with a special kind of efficacy

concerning local research, evaluation and development (0,16). Head teachers' pedagogical leadership had no direct or total effect on professional self-efficacy, but it was positively related to critical cooperation, in-service training, common norms, and the feeling of being autonomous. So it seems to make an impact on the organizing of schools.

It still ought to be a problem that in-service training has no effect on professional efficacy for classroom work. It may be that these novice teachers had not enough experience to turn in-service training into classroom practice, or that this experience is generally lacking among teachers. Or that in-service training is not concrete enough for use in class-rooms. The opinion on in-service training was heavily affected by teachers' attitudes to their own teacher education, which is not surprising given that universities are strong actors at the inset market. Teachers who liked their basic education could obviously feel at home taking part in such inset.

It is interesting that understanding the roles of special education teachers, pupil care staff, and head teachers was the second most influential factor on professional efficacy. Probably this means that many teachers struggle to take in the perspectives on pupils that these professionals have. Head teachers in Sweden are often strongly engaged in the well-being of pupils. This is a good thing, I think. A problem, however, is that the understanding of these roles is not connected to teachers' critical cooperation with colleagues. You may suspect two separate kinds of professional communities. But those novice teachers, who succeed in building relations with the other community, seem to have been rewarded in professional self-efficacy.

**Mette Liljenberg:** To make sense of teacher collaboration and common learning. Development efforts in three schools

Since the 1980s teacher teams have been a common feature in Swedish schools to encourage collaborative learning. However, research has shown that such teams have seldom resulted in deeper pedagogical collaboration and learning among teachers. To increase learning and collaboration, the development of *professional learning communities* (PLC) in schools, has been emphasised.

The aim of this article is to contribute with knowledge about principals' and teachers' *sensemaking* when trying to develop teacher collaboration and common learning in their schools. The following research questions directed the study: How do teachers and principals make sense of the development efforts? How can the outcomes of the development efforts be understood on the basis of how meaning is created?

According to Weick sensemaking is the process through which people in organisations, both as individuals and as collectives, and in relation to institutionalised frames, reduce complexity and make pragmatic interpretations to be able to make sense of new concepts or practices. In this study Weick's understanding of sensemaking was used for the analysis.

The study employed a multiple-case study design that included principals and teaching staff of three schools. Collected data consisted of direct observations of meetings and individual semi-structured interviews with principals, teacher leaders and teachers.

The three schools in the study used three different ideas to support the development of teacher collaboration and common learning. In the North school the principal introduced "*working teacher teams*". In the West school, *learning groups* were introduced and the South school introduced a common *development group*. The analysis showed that teachers and principals, to handle the new situations, initially made pragmatic interpretations based on institutionalized frames. If other credible interpretation alternatives were visualized teachers and principals were able to establish new frames for sensemaking. Norms, values and traditions that existed in the local schools gave different possibilities for this. Artifacts and the possibility for teacher leaders to be "change poets" in the development process also affected outcomes of the development efforts.

In the North school the principal left it up to the teachers to make their own interpretations of working teacher teams. Teachers who did not see a need for change tried to hold on to the existing frames about teacher collaboration and learning. Teacher team leaders, who saw benefits of a change, felt no support for a less pragmatic interpretation, neither from the staff nor the principal. Norms and traditions, which can be understood as the current frame for sensemaking, prevented the development of teacher collaboration and common learning in the North school. In the West school, where *learning groups* were introduced, teacher reactions were initially in line with teacher reactions in the North school. However, the teacher leaders did not share the pragmatic interpretation initially made and invited both the principal and the teachers into new conversations. By that, alternative interpretations were visualized and supporting artifacts established. Also at the South school pragmatic interpretations of the introduced forums were made. However, unlike the two previous schools, teacher collaboration was strong and teacher learning had a self-evident position in the school. The current frame for sensemaking opened up conversation and discussion about its forms and supported further development of collaboration and learning. The analysis showed that the culture stimulated double-loop learning, i.e. critique and far-reaching suggestions, which also came to challenge the principals and their desire for control in relation to the new development group. As in the West school, the so called development leader, through his conversation with principals

and teachers, had a significant role as “change poet” in the development effort. Supporting artifacts also contributed to a positive outcome in the South school.

The article shows that the need to create meaning in development efforts should not be underestimated, especially if the intention is to change deeply institutionalized thoughts about teacher collaboration and learning. Meaning arises in teachers and principals need to simplify new concepts and practices to be able to relate them to how they already perceive their role and their work. Important was, in the three development efforts in the study, how far teacher collaboration in everyday work had evolved. In the North school it was very underdeveloped. In the West school it was still rather underdeveloped this made it difficult for the learning group organization to support the everyday work. In the South School teacher team work was more developed which therefore enabled the development group to support the teachers in their work.

That schools in their development efforts make organizational changes are common, but in order to get results, they may also need to take into account how principals, teacher leaders and teachers will be supported in their understanding of the new arrangements as well as who takes responsibility for that development takes the desired direction.

### **Lill Langelotz:** The (re)construction of a “good” teacher

This study draws on data from a two and a half year long interactive project with a teacher team in Sweden. A specific nine-step model of peer group mentoring was introduced to enhance peer reflection. The project aimed to enhance teaching practice to support students learning.

A new group of students began to attend this inner-city school. This group of immigrant students from the suburbs posed great challenges to the teachers who expressed their lack of experiences of teaching this “type of students”. To help the teachers (and the students) the principal offered time for professional development to come up with teaching strategies through peer group mentoring (PGM).

In both national and international research literature concerning teachers’ continuing professional development (CPD), there often seems to be a normative consensus to enhance ‘professional learning communities’ (PLC), in which teachers are expected to share professional experiences and to reflect upon these in groups to increase their pedagogical knowledge. Hence, various kinds of group-mentoring have become common in Sweden. Mutual learning to improve educational practice is frequently described as something very important and “good”.

The aim of this study was to explore what enabled and constrained the practice of peer group mentoring and to scrutinize what kind of teacher subjects that was constituted during the mentoring sessions. Furthermore, the stigmatization of the individual vis-à-vis the development of the collective was examined. Practice architecture was used as a theoretical frame and Foucault's notion of power was adopted as an analytical tool. Pastoral power is one of several techniques for disciplining and shaping the subject according to Foucault. In the analysis of the practice of peer group mentoring were disciplining processes and pastoral power focused. The analysis was carried out in the form of a two-part structure. First, external arrangements that pre-figured the practice were examined. Data from 19 peer group mentoring sessions, five teacher team meetings and individual interviews both with the principal and six of the teachers were used. In the second analysis one peer group mentoring session was investigated. The analysis involved to scrutinize power relations, constructions of "good" teachers and "good" teaching practice.

The result showed that social-political arrangement (i.e. the organisation of teachers in teacher team) and the teachers' 'relatings' were important pre-figurations for the practice of peer group mentoring. The teachers had relations that had developed over the years in the teacher team. The relatings were deepened during the peer group mentoring. An increased solidarity among the participants enabled the group mentoring process even though some of the teachers had bad experiences of previous mentoring projects. Cultural-discursive arrangements, such as a normative collaboration discourse, enabled the practice as well. The notion of the importance of collaboration made the teachers to participate in the mentoring process.

The specific model of group mentoring constrained and disciplined the individuals to talk and listen in a specific way; "all voices became heard" as some of them expressed. These manners were brought into other practices as well. They used this specific form of talking when they had other meetings. During the peer group mentoring session contradictive teacher skills were articulated. Other professionals' skills related to after-school teachers and police men served as contradictions to teachers' competences. The participants were in addition constructed as "good" or "bad" teachers during the mentoring conversation, by pastoral power inbuilt in the model. They confessed their lack of pedagogical knowledge. Instructional advices how to teach were "hidden" in the teachers' questions although they were supposed to be reflective and investigative rather than prescriptive. Through these confessions and via the facilitation the teachers constructed themselves and each other. One of the teachers was constructed less competent than the other. According to Foucault, orders and corrections as well as encouragement, shape the individual, as she tends to take over external categorisations created in a practice and use these in the positioning of herself

as a subject. There is a risk that stigmatizing subjects are articulated and shaped during peer group mentoring. Furthermore, the interactive research approach partly enabled the PGM-practice, but at the same time effected the teachers' positioning of each other, a scientific technology manifested by the interactive research approach disciplined the teachers. Anyhow, power relations became every so often fluent and mutual among the participants in the joint project. The disciplining model made various processes of subjectifications possible during the mentoring sessions. Maybe the aim of the project – to enhance all students' possibilities of learning – has to be prioritized although it may cause individual teacher trouble and frustration.